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THE PLACE OF THE EXTENSION SERVICE IN THE FARM SITUATION OF 1933

A radio talk by C. W. Warburton, Director of Extension Work, U. S. V. E. D. Department of Agriculture, delivered during the Land-Grant College radio program, Wednesday, January 18, 1933, broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC radio stations. ★
U. S. Department of Agriculture

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Friends of the radio audience:

As we face the new year, one particularly hopeful fact stands out in the farm situation. This is the fact that nearly everybody agrees that more buying power for the farm family is essential to the return of business activity and prosperity. I do not propose to discuss with you the many proposals put forward for governmental action to attain this goal that the nation seeks but I do want to outline to you something of what farm families are doing to bring themselves as far on the road to recovery as they can in the face of shattered farm prices and rigid fixed charges. They have set to work with determination to improve their buying power in the only ways which the individual can apply - namely, raising the net income of the farm, and cutting down the cost of family living. In this effort the Extension Service is giving them every aid at its command.

The first step for farmers and farm women in every county is to understand their economic situation thoroughly. Otherwise, they will not know on which farm enterprises to concentrate or what agricultural industries to develop. The view farm people take of the present situation will influence the agricultural development of each county, not only for the coming year, but for many years to come. In this effort the Extension Service is proving of distinct help. The county extension agent, as the representative of the Extension Service in the county, brings to the people of his county as helpful and complete information bearing on the situation as the State agricultural colleges and the United States Department of Agriculture can supply.

In the existing situation farmers are organizing and operating their farms to produce with the smallest expenditure of money, time, and effort. In accomplishing this result they make use of the latest and most helpful information provided by the Extension Service on efficient methods in growing crops and livestock, in preventing losses from waste, diseases, and pests, and in the use of improved crop varieties and cultural methods. Farmers also are shown how to make many adjustments that will bring about the most economical use of labor, power, and machinery.

After the farmer has reduced his production costs to the lowest possible point, he wants to sell his products to the best advantage. The Extension Service is doing much to help improve such marketing processes as packing, grading, and standardizing commodities, and reduce losses in marketing channels, warehousing, and storage. It keeps farmers informed on probable market demands and thus enables them to adjust their production plans and to know when to sell.

Wherever possible, farm families are developing new sources of income. The sale of surplus products of the garden, poultry flock, and home dairy will contribute this year in no small degree to the income of many farm homes. The Extension Service receives and responds to many requests for information enabling the men, women and young people on the farm to employ themselves in

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home industries and crafts. County extension agents are giving every encouragement to boys and girls 4-H club members to increase their efforts. A fat baby beef, one or two hogs, the produce of a garden, home canned fruits and vegetables, clothing, and furnishings remodeled or manufactured from inexpensive materials help greatly to maintain the family standard of living during the present situation.

One of the most serious problems of the farmer just now is to keep up what he knows to be good farming, in the face of lower prices for his products. The Extension Service aids him in many ways in making annual farm inventories, in filing credit statements at banks and in generally putting himself in a position to make the most efficient use of sound credit. The planned production and conservation of home grown foods are being stressed. Practical suggestions are being given for clothing the farm family more economically, for saving time and energy in doing the work of the household, and for making the best use of available funds. 4-H Club girls are being encouraged to outdo, if possible, the enviable contribution which they made to economical and satisfying farm living in 1931 and 1932.

Attractive surroundings, good health, wholesome recreation, and social contacts with neighbors can do much to relieve the strain of the problems and difficulties of the present farm situation. Particularly do we seek to lessen the menace to the health of the farm family of illness resulting from lack of adequate nourishment and clothing. Nothing the Extension Service is doing is more important than its work of supplying farm families with practical recommendations for menus that will provide an adequate and properly balanced diet from the products of the farm or from foods wisely and economically purchased.

So far, I have outlined for you some of the helps which the Extension Service is making available in meeting the individual farm family's problem of adjusting its plans and methods of work to 1933 conditions. But there are other problems affecting the farm situation and ways of dealing with them that need to be understood. The restoration of sound financial conditions, tax adjustments and controlled production are among them. The need for reliable information in relation to these problems and the methods used to meet them is urgent. We intend that every man and woman in the Extension Service shall be able to help you to understand the effects upon you and your community of any action taken by national and State and local governments to ease the burden imposed upon farmers generally by high fixed charges and low prices.

Finally, let me remind you that in bringing to farm people facts bearing on the scientific adjustment of their business and mode of living and of the whole national economic machine to the conditions of the times, the Extension Service serves everyone. We are, as I said at the beginning of this talk, well agreed that raising farm buying power is essential to economic betterment not only for the farm family but for all of us. I am confident that in this effort to establish farm buying power the Extension Service will make a substantial contribution in 1933. In so doing, it can and will render a genuine public service to the whole nation.